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## **10:01 p.m.: Bounce City may reopen Wed.**

**By Shawn McGrath**

An Anderson amusement business is expected to reopen Wednesday, after owners say a communications snafu forced the business to close Monday.

Bounce City, 815 E. 53rd St., closed Monday after communications between an architect hired to develop a design plan for occupancy and the Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office deteriorated, said Scott Hester, who co-owns the business.

Hester said an Indianapolis attorney negotiated the business's reopening, expected to be Wednesday.

In late November, the fire marshal's office gave the business 45 days to hire an architect to develop the design plan for occupancy.

Hester said the architect had some questions for the state fire marshal and sent them in writing to that office. But apparently they were never received. Adding to the mix-up, other paperwork from the state fire marshal's office was sent to an incorrect address in Anderson.

"We had a situation where the architect and state fire marshal's office weren't communicating well," Hester said Tuesday, "and that kind of caught us in the middle."

Between lost revenue, and the expense of hiring an attorney, Hester said he couldn't estimate how much the closure cost the business.

"Obviously, it's expensive when you have errors like this," he said. "But a dollar figure would be anyone's guess."

Hester said an architect is still developing the design plan. Pam Bright, public information director for the state's Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the state fire marshal's office, couldn't immediately be reached for comment Tuesday.

Bounce City features inflatable rides and various pieces of playground equipment. It opened over the summer at Southdale Plaza, inside the former Kmart building.



## Water swamps dam, floods roads

**Snow melt may add days to water woes**

BY MIKE RICKETTS [miker@tmnews.com](mailto:miker@tmnews.com)

March 11, 2008

BEDFORD — The East Fork of the White River crested at Bedford and Williams on Sunday but officials expect some of the county's roads to be closed a few more days.

"Some of them will probably open up in two or three days," said Lawrence County Highway Superintendent Dan Lucas. "I don't know that they will all be open in two or three days, but some will."

Currently, Ind. 450 and seven county roads are under water.

Hydrologist Al Shipe at the National Weather Service in Indianapolis said water levels should get back down in a day or so with the exception of the roads in eastern Lawrence County, which are low lying.

The weekend snow won't bring the river back up, he added. The snow-melt will just cause the river to hold its level a little longer.

No rain is forecast until Thursday but it won't likely be significant, Shipe said.

The flood levels this time, Shipe said, were higher than last month. The river crested at Williams and Bedford Sunday at 10.4 feet and 24.3 feet, respectively.

But those levels pale in comparison to 2005 and March 2006, when Bedford went over 30 feet.

And really pale to 1913 when Bedford hit 46 feet.

"If that one comes back, you're in big trouble," Shipe said.

Indiana Department of Transportation officials warn that it doesn't take a flood of 1913 proportions to be disastrous.

"When encountering a flooded roadway, INDOT urges drivers to turn around and not drive through standing water," according to a press release from INDOT. "According to the National Weather Service, most flooding deaths occur in automobiles. Six inches of standing water is enough to cause passenger cars to stall and a foot of water will float many vehicles."

# Herald Journal

## Bill to guard against further flood damage

**Scott Allen**

Reporter

The authors of new, general assembly-backed legislation awaiting the governor's signature aim to make changes to reconstruction methods within a floodway.

State Sen. Brandt Hershman (R-Wheatfield) authored Senate Bill 104, which was introduced Jan. 8, 2008. If passed, it will remove some restrictions that would hamper home reconstruction and put in place other requirements to help prevent further damage bringing Indiana law in sync with federal regulations.

"Many Hoosiers will receive the necessary relief needed to rebuild their lives and homes," Hershman said in a press release. "I look forward to the governor signing this important piece of legislation to help our northern Indiana residents move forward."

Hershman was joined by co-author Sen. Dennis Kruse (R-Auburn) on Jan. 29; later that day, the bill passed the Senate 48-0.

Also that day, House Representatives Robert Bischoff (D-North Vernon) and Don Lehe (R-Brookston) joined the bill as House sponsors. Bischoff is the chair of the Natural Resources Study Committee.

"I hope that this will be a benefit to allow more people to reconstruct in their existing locations," said Lehe. "My understanding of the intent of it, I thought it would be good for more homeowners in the flood areas. Currently, the way I understand it, it would allow people to rebuild where otherwise they would not be able to build."

The House approved amendments to the bill on Feb. 12; after the Senate concurred with their changes, the House passed SB 104 Wednesday, March 5. Later that day, Sen. Ed Charbonneau (R-Valparaiso) was added as third co-author.

The bill will modify Indiana Code 14-28, which deals with flood control and flood plain management. If passed, SB-104 will remove language that does not allow home reconstruction when substantial damage (damage equal to or more than 50 percent of the home's value) occurs by flooding. The existing language states that a homeowner cannot begin reconstruction of a residence that is located in a floodway and is substantially damaged by a means other than floodwater, unless the person has obtained a permit.

"The Department of Natural Resources, who I've been working with on disaster recovery issues related to the flooding, contacted me to point out a bureaucratic entanglement they had, in that a state regulation was different than federal regulations in rebuilding," said Hershman. "Since much of the money, if not all of the money that comes in disaster relief is federal money, it seemed to make sense to have state and federal regulations in harmony."

Those rules are already required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program; SB 104 will align the DNR, Indiana's regulatory agency for floodplains, with FEMA's rules.

"Having two sets of rules for homeowners to follow while they're trying to recover from a disaster would just be an unnecessary headache."

While homeowners will still be required to get permits for reconstruction, the code now allows for the rebuilding of homes damaged by flooding, not just from other calamities such as fires or tornados.

The bill also removes some of the red tape required to start the reconstruction process by removing the state board of

finance from the administration and approval procedures concerning the flood control revolving fund.

Another proposed change to the law could make the rebuilding process an expensive one for some homeowners, although the intent is to prevent further complications in the future.

The law, if signed by the governor, will require those who qualify for reconstruction to raise the base of their homes at least two feet above the 100-year flood level. Previously, the law only required homes to be rebuilt at the 100-year flood level.

"The goal is really two-fold: one, to allow people to enjoy their homes in relative safety; the second, to avoid the reoccurring problem of using taxpayer dollars to help people rebuild in flood-prone areas," said Hershman. "So, this strikes a balance in that people are allowed to rebuild if they minimize the future risk to their home by moving their foundation above the historic flood level."

Since raising the home above flood level is a requirement to rebuild substantially damaged homes, those who have flood insurance should find it the expense covered. Others without flood insurance typically qualify for FEMA grants and low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Those without flood insurance whose lake- and riverside homes are considered a second residence will likely find themselves facing the burden unassisted by the government; second or vacation homes are not deemed as pressing as ensuring people have a primary residence to which they can return.

Hershman expects that Governor Daniels will approve the legislation and sign it soon. "It takes a few days for the legislation to move through the process here at the state house," explained Hershman. "Then the governor takes some time to review the legislation with his advisors; but I have not received any indication that there should be any problem."

# Herald Journal

## Couple raises home damaged by floods

**Scott Allen**

Reporter

One Monticello homeowner is in the process of having his home rebuilt and raised to the federal and soon-to-be state regulation height after flooding destroyed his home.

Phil Schmidt, who with wife Trudis live on Diamond Point Court south of Norway Dam on the east side of the Tippecanoe River, began rebuilding soon after the Jan. 8 flood. After the February flooding, he began to re-build - directing the work from his winter home in Sebring, Fla.

The Schmidts were at their Florida house when news reached him about the flooding. "(We were feeling) shock, despair, anguish," said Phil Schmidt. He lamented having been told that because his home was not in a floodplain, he didn't need flood insurance.

"We were told by insurance people, 'Phil, you don't need flood insurance, because there's never been water there,'" he said. "I'm not blaming anybody; but in hindsight I think, 'Gosh, I wish you hadn't listened to that.'"

When the Jan. 8 flooding struck, Schmidt contacted Mike Kesler, co-owner of Xtreme Contractors in Reynolds, from Florida. Kesler took a crew to the Schmidt house and gutted the place, moving all the furniture and valuables out of the house to storage in order to begin repairing.

"We had 16 inches (of water), I think, in the house," explained Schmidt. "We had to replace most of the drywall, all of the carpeting, all of the floors, all of the ductwork, the washer and dryer; Some of the furniture in the living room was ruined; we really don't know exactly what the total loss is at this time."

The Schmidts have been back twice to visit their primary home, once after each flood. When Phil saw the result of the second flood, he made a decision that would dramatically change the look of his home,

"When you have two 100-year floods in a 32-day period; and the second one got within eight inches of the new floor we had put in, it was just the deciding factor that we've got to raise the house and get us out of the flood plain," said Schmidt.

Having the home raised to two feet above the flood level is a reconstruction requirement by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which will likely be mimicked in Indiana regulations if Senate Bill 104, which has passed the Senate and House of Representatives, is signed by Governor Daniels.

The two feet above flood level measure applies to homes that sustained damage equal to or greater than 50 percent of the home's value. "I had to hire a surveyor out to give me that elevation, and we have to make sure we're 24 inches higher than that," he said. "So there was a little bit of a paper chase: there was the standard building permit; and then the standard building permit led us to the DNR permit, or the flood plain permit which requires two foot."

Kesler indicated that having the house recertified above the flood level should lower Schmidt's insurance in the future.

The house-raising process, according to Kesler's estimates, may cost from \$15,000 to \$40,000 or more, dependent on the type of home (manufactured, wood, brick, etc.). "I don't think you'd get a house lifted for under \$10,000," he said.

Schmidt accepted disaster relief funds from FEMA, but will have to use other funds to complete the work. If his

private funds don't cover it all, he expected to borrow the rest from a local bank. Other homeowners without those means are encouraged to pursue low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The process of actually lifting the house can be complex. In the case of the Schmidts, their home was manufactured, and so it has a steel frame built on the underside. This made the lifting process easier; on non-manufactured homes, beams have to be positioned underneath the house to support the weight and keep the structure from simply crumbling as it is lifted.

Xtreme subcontracted Lafayette's All-Sets, who specializes in setting manufactured homes on foundation, to aid in the lifting process.

When the underside of the base floor is sound, all utilities connected to the house are disconnected to keep from hindering the lifting process. "Once you get all the utilities disconnected, then you have to go outside the home and look at anything that might be attached to the outside of the house that would restrict you from raising it," said Kesler.

Garages and porches must first be separated from the main part of the home, to be lifted separately.

"Once that process is done, you bring the lifting devices under the house, and start the lifting process. After the house is raised to the given elevation, then the mason lays the new concrete block footings underneath the walls," explained Kesler. "Then, we set the house back down and all those utilities have to be reconnected.

The lifting process on the Schmidt house from start to finish took five days. Standard houses, said Kesler, can take over two weeks.

The Schmidts look forward to coming back to Indiana. "We're going up next week just to see the results of having raised the house. We'll have the painting and the floor covering put in, then probably come back first part of April for good. And by that time... everything ought to be ready to be put back in, hopefully.

"Mike has been excellent. In fact, without Mike, I don't know what we'd do," concluded Schmidt.

Area contractors look forward to helping people meet the regulations and rebuild their homes, hopefully out of harm's way.

Said Kesler, "We would like to be the grounding point for people to say 'Okay, where do I go from here?' and we can guide them, we can help them, we can do it different phases... to make it more affordable for people."



## Across the Wabash Valley: March 12, 2008

Dixie Bee

Second-grade scientists have certainly been busy at Dixie Bee during the second semester! All five classes recently completed units of study about the weather and displayed projects and activities pertaining to this unit at the Dixie Bee Science Fair on March 1. Clouds, seasons, weather instruments, types of severe weather, and severe weather preparedness were topics covered during class lessons. The second-grade students and teachers would like to thank television station WTWO meteorologist Jesse Walker for visiting Dixie Bee and teaching us so much about weather forecasting. The classes of Mrs. Thornton, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Sluder will next be studying the solar system. All second-grade classes took a field trip to the Allen Memorial Planetarium on Friday. Mr. Moss and class learned about energy and Mrs. Canal's class extended its study of Earth's weather to a unit about maps and globes.

All classes at Dixie Bee are busily preparing books, portfolios and other literacy projects for display at the Literacy Fair scheduled 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at The Meadows. Please stop by to see examples of the hard work we do in class every day and the value we place on reading and writing experiences in our school.

— Cheryl Thornton